

TOBELO, MORO, TERNATE: THE COSMOLOGICAL VALORIZATION OF HISTORICAL EVENTS*

J. D. M. PLATENKAMP

WESTFÄLISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER

Introduction

Among the myths recorded to date among the Tobelo of North Halmahera, one category—usually called “histories” (*sejarah*)—deals specifically with the relation between the Tobelo people and the sultans and sangajis who once ruled Ternate, Jailolo, and Gamkonora. To these rulers the myths often attribute the role of imposing upon Tobelo society a previously unknown sociopolitical order, entailing the division of Tobelo society into various domains (Tobelo *hoana*, Ternaten *soa*). The identity of and mutual relations between these domains are valorized by the assignment of different Ternaten titles, such as those of *sangaji*, *hukum*, and *kiemalaha*.

Undoubtedly these myths reflect upon the historical processes whereby Tobelo society over the centuries has become gradually incorporated into the larger political spheres of influence, first, of the Ternaten realm, and then, of the Dutch colonial empire. Yet these oral histories are less concerned with giving an account considered accurate according to Western canons of historiography—the dating of the main events is conspicuously absent—than with providing a structure for relationships, retaining some events and linking them to one another in a pattern of meaning that differs fundamentally from the one searched for by the historian.

I aim to explore this process of selecting—and forging relations between—past events by examining a small sample of the myths that, according to their Tobelo compilers, deal with the “history” (*sejarah*) of

*I wish to thank D. de Coppet, W. M. A. Henneke, M. Prager, and T. A. Vestergaard for their critical comments on an earlier version of this article.

Tobelo society. To that end I will confront these myths with the (admittedly sparse) historical data available from this part of North Halmahera that refer to those events. The events in question took place during two successive periods of history. The first covers almost the entire sixteenth century, during which a society called Moro was caught in the ongoing confrontation between the local centers of power, Ternate, Tidore, and Jailolo, and the Portuguese and Spanish. This brought about the disappearance of Moro society from North Halmahera and Morotai at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. During the second period, stretching from the mid-seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century, the Tobelo moved out of the interior of the northern peninsula, to disperse over the east coast and over part of Morotai. There they took possession of the no man's land once occupied by the Moro people, developing a territorial order dividing the Tobelo coastal territory into various domains (Tobelo *hoana*).

I shall first discuss these historical data in a necessarily abridged form, then present a full account of one of the myths concerned. A comparison with other variants will reveal how they restructure the historical events by applying a model made up of fundamental socio-cosmological relationships.

Moro

When the Portuguese arrived in the north Maluku in the beginning of the sixteenth century, they found the eastern coast of the northern peninsula of Halmahera, then called Morotia, and the island of Morotai occupied by a people known as the Moro.¹ In these areas, nowadays inhabited by the Tobelo and the Galela, the Moro inhabited a large number of coastal villages. In 1556, the total number of those Moro villages that had adopted Christianity was set at 46 or 47, each counting between 700 and 800 inhabitants.² Six years later, 36 Christian villages were counted, each with about 1000 inhabitants.³ In the northern peninsula, Moro villages were found from Cape Bissoa in the north to Cawa—near the present-

¹The name Moro was an ethnonym deriving from the name of the regions Morotia 'Moro landward' and Morotai 'Moro seaward/overseas'.

²Letter of Frois dated 1556, in Villiers 1983: 284.

³Villiers 1983: 283.

day town of Tobelo—in the south.⁴ The island of Morotia and the smaller island of Rau were populated by Moro exclusively; in 1588 about 29 Christian settlements were located there, the same number being reported again in 1608.⁵

The Moro population was very numerous in comparison to the neighboring groups, even if we read the Portuguese missionary accounts—virtually the only sources available—with caution. In the mid-sixteenth century, according to the most conservative estimation the Moro population must have amounted to at least 20,000 people.⁶ The significance of such population numbers is evident from the fact that, when in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Moro had disappeared from the region, the remaining non-Moro population of all Halmahera was said to number 2917 people.⁷

Moro society stood apart from its neighbors, such as the Tobelo, the Galela, and the Tobaru, in other respects as well. The settlements of the latter groups were all situated in the interior and did not belong to any of the four povoação (Tolo, Sugala, Mamuya in Morotia, and Cawo in Morotai) which made up Moro territory in 1536, nor to any of the eight districts (Sugala, Sakita, Mamuya, Tolo, Cawa, Sopi, Mira, and Cawo) in

⁴Further to the south of Cawa, in territory claimed by the Tidore sultans, the coastal settlement of Samafo was located. Its Moro inhabitants were part Muslims, part Christians. Portuguese Jesuits insisted that the Christians should live separated, and Sultan Hairun of Ternate allowed 200 of them to settle in Tolo (Tiele 1880: 337).

⁵Schurhammer 1963: 774.

⁶Twenty thousand is the number of *converts* given by Fr. Nunes, missionary in Moro since 1547 and considered by Schurhammer as “der beste Kenner des Landes.” Not all Moro settlements allowed the missionaries entrance. It was of course in the interest of the missionaries to express their success by presenting large numbers of conversions (Andaya 1993). Most of the Portuguese sources thus give higher numbers: 32,200 in 1556, 36,000 in 1562. Fr. Alfonso de Castro sets the Moro population at 35,500, 3000 of whom live in the town of Tolo. The number of conversions would have exceeded even the number of inhabitants: in 1547, 40,000 conversions are reported, in 1588, even 60,000–80,000. Such figures are obviously quite exaggerated. (Villiers 1983: 283; Schurhammer 1963: 774)

⁷Van Dam 1936: 114.

which the territory was divided in 1588.⁸ The sangaji appointed to each of these Moro districts, presumably by Ternate, exercised no authority over Tobelo, Tobaru, or Galela.

The Moro villages maintained a tributary relationship with Ternate. They provided Ternate, and to a lesser extent Tidore and Jailolo, with foodstuffs. In 1536, it was reported that “the kings of [Maluku] have a country known as O Moro divided among them ... [The kings] have no supplies or revenues from which to sustain themselves except those they get from Moro, where there is much rice and sago and many swine and chickens ... The people of Moro are the slaves (*escravos*) of these kings.”⁹ This division of the Moro lands had provided Ternate with the largest part of the territory.¹⁰ It has been observed that “the exact nature of Ternate’s suzerainty is difficult to determine from the Portuguese sources in which the term *escravo* is applied loosely to denote all manner of gradations of bondage from the rendering of occasional corvée services ... and payment of tribute to vassalage and complete slavery.”¹¹ At any rate, Moro appear to have participated in Ternaten military expeditions. Thus 5000 to 6000 subjects of the heads of the Moro settlements of Mamuya and Tolo are said to have been part of the Ternaten troops that helped the Portuguese Tristão de Ataíde in 1533 conquer Jailolo and defeat the Spanish fleet. But other types of tribute were due to Ternate as well. A Portuguese source speaks of the “tyranny and extortions ... which the Muslim rulers exercised over [the Moro of Mamuya] taking from them all their cloth and all the crops that God gave them ... enslaving their women and children, the labourers who gathered the cloves, the fishermen and the small people.”¹²

The Moro had not adopted Islam. In 1536, it was reported that the heads of the Moro settlements of Mamuya, Tolo, Cawa, and Sugala, and their retinue—said to amount to 7000 people¹³—were successively bap-

⁸Schurhammer 1963: 776. Villiers (1983: 277) includes Tobelo and Galela among the “six towns” that make up Moro territory but does not refer to the source of this information.

⁹Letter of 1536 from Captain Lionel de Lima to the Portuguese king, in Villiers 1983:280.

¹⁰Schurhammer 1963: 756.

¹¹Villiers 1983:287.

¹²Letter of 1534 from Ataíde to the Portuguese king, in Villiers 1983: 280.

¹³But see note 6.

tized by Portuguese priests and supplied with abundant gifts in Portuguese clothing,¹⁴ whereupon a Portuguese stronghold was established in Mamuya. This initiated a disruption of the tributary relationship with Ternate, since afterwards the Moro settlements in question “refused to give any more supplies” to Ternate.¹⁵

In 1536 Katarabumi, the ruler of Jailolo, supported by an alliance with Tidore and Bacan, expelled the Portuguese from Moro and conquered the Moro settlements. Warriors of the Tobaru people living in the Ibu river basin in northwest Halmahera took an active part. Portuguese sources relate that they were greatly feared for their ability to move through the forest unnoticed and attack suddenly, “so that they were said to be able to turn themselves invisible.”¹⁶ In the following four years, Portuguese troops succeeded in reoccupying all the Moro settlements (except for Sugala) “and found [the Moro] prepared to supply them from now on with food.”¹⁷ But in the years that followed, the Moro villages of Tolo and Mamuya suffered particularly from Tobaru raids, as did the Moro settlements in Morotia island from attacks by Jailolo.

Sometime in the 1540s, Jailolo must have conquered the settlement of Tolo, characterized by Rebelo as “the largest, the most populous, and the strongest of all the places in the Moro Islands,”¹⁸ for in 1549 Sultan Hairun of Ternate set out to reconquer Tolo with Portuguese support. While it was under siege, the neighboring volcano Tolo erupted; Tolo village was taken and its occupants from Jailolo chased into the mountains.¹⁹ Upon his return to Moro in 1553, the Jesuit priest João de Beira, interpreting the events as a divine token, reported how “many thousands of people ... sometimes five thousand in one day and fifteen thousand in one week” were converted in its aftermath.²⁰

Both the rulers of Gamkonora (situated along the west coast of the north Halmaheran peninsula) and the sultan of Ternate continued to threaten the Moro settlements. In 1570, Puni, near Mamuya, and other settlements were attacked and destroyed by Sultan Babullah of Ternate.

¹⁴Schurhammer 1963: 756–757.

¹⁵Letter of 1536 from Lima to the Portuguese king, in Villiers 1983: 280.

¹⁶Tiele 1880: 316.

¹⁷Tiele 1879: 53.

¹⁸Rebelo, *Historias das Ilhas de Maluco* 1651, quoted in Villiers 1983: 277.

¹⁹Tiele 1879: 314.

²⁰Tiele 1879: 334.

Among the victims were both Moro and Portuguese. In the following decades, the Moro population was decimated by repeated attacks.²¹

In 1606, when the Dutch had driven the Portuguese out of Tidore, a Spanish fleet approaching Ternate was met with gunshots from a Dutch vessel. With Tidore's support, the Spanish took Ternate, and the treaty concluded between the Ternaten sultan and the Spanish commanders stipulated that "the king restore the villages of the Christians in the islands of the Moro ... and that they should not molest any Muslims who may wish to become Christians, and that if any bad Christian should go to [Ternaten] country to throw off his religion they should give him up." The source commented that "in this way the great and the small remained contented and satisfied, seeing themselves free from the tyranny with which the king of Ternate has threatened them."²² As soon as the Spanish commander had deported the sultan of Ternate to the Philippines, however, Tidore seized the opportunity to plunder the Moro settlements once more. These were also still being raided from the hinterland. In Tolo, for instance, in 1606 the inhabitants of Samafo and Cawa had sought refuge from raids conducted by Galela and Tobelo, the latter living eight miles inland.²³ This compelled the Spaniards to post garrisons in the settlements to protect "the befriended inhabitants against those of Galela and Tobelo."²⁴ They were withdrawn again in 1613 to assist in the defense of Tidore against a combined Dutch–Ternaten attack. The Jesuit missionary Simi tried to persuade the people of Tolo to flee to Morotai, but they preferred to depart for Bicoli, a Muslim area in Tidore's Halmaheran territory. Camping at Bicoli beach, they were all captured by Ternaten troops.²⁵ Tolo was destroyed completely. In 1617 the site was said to be covered with forest, showing no trace of former habitation.²⁶

Fearing to meet a similar fate, the Moro settlements in the island of Morotai allied themselves with Ternate, but to no avail. After the Spanish garrisons were withdrawn, under the rule of Sultan Modafar of Ternate (1610–1627), the inhabitants of Cawo, Sopi, Mira, and Sakita were

²¹Pereira 1594, quoted in Schurhammer 1963: 774.

²²De Morga 1868: 256–257.

²³Schurhammer 1963: 775.

²⁴Tiele 1884: 56–57.

²⁵Letter dated 17 June 1614, quoted in Wessels 1935: 54.

²⁶Schurhammer 1963: 775.

deported from Morotai to the isthmus of Dodiga and to Jailolo. Under the reign of Modafar's successor, the remaining eight hundred Moro were enslaved in Ternate and forcibly converted to Islam.²⁷ Earlier, part of the population had already been deported to Tidore, where "the number of Christians had increased by the arrival of inhabitants of Morotai where the crown prince [of Tidore] had undertaken a great raid on a mission deserted [by the garrison], and had taken many prisoners, men, women and children, and brought them as slaves to Tidore."²⁸

Then the historical sources turn silent on Moro. When in 1724 Valentyn published his *Uitvoerige beschryving der vyf Moluccas* [Extensive description of the five Moluccas], Moro society already belonged to the past, and Tolo, once "the most prestigious town in the Moluccas,"²⁹ was erroneously situated in the island of Morotai. "The Portuguese know many things about this Tolo ... the Moro kingdom used to be situated somewhere around here."³⁰

Tobelo

In Portuguese reports the inhabitants of the settlements of Tobelo and Galela, but above all the Tobaru, stood out for the ruthless and indiscriminate violence with which they raided the Moro settlements during the major part of the sixteenth century. "In this island there is a people called Tavaros. They are pagans whose sheer happiness is in killing whomever they can, and one says that often they kill their women and children whenever they cannot find someone else."³¹ While the Tobaru occupied the basin of the Ibu River, the Galela lived at least until 1666 in

²⁷Pereira 1594, quoted in Schurhammer 1963: 774. A Dutch source leaves the role of Ternate unmentioned. He speaks of "people ... in the days of king Modafar who fled from the island Morotia [Morotai?], since they could no longer persist against the stealing and plundering people of Maba and Patani" (van Dam 1936: 108). Van Fraassen (1980: 92) estimates the deportation to have taken place under Sultan Hamja of Ternate in 1628.

²⁸Letter from de Silva to Phillips III, quoted in Wessels 1935: 62.

²⁹Tiele 1880: 313.

³⁰Valentyn 1724: 95.

³¹Xavier, in Schurhammer 1963: 784; cf. Villiers 1983: 281. Remarkably, Tobelo myths about the Tobaru collected in this century continue to propagate this horrific reputation. See note 56.

a settlement of that name, situated at the shores of Lake Galela.³² In the mid-sixteenth century, the Galela, said to be Muslims and subject to the ruler of Gamkonora,³³ repeatedly raided the Moro settlement of Mamuya, and in 1606 attacked Tolo as well.

The name Tobelo appears for the first time in 1606, when the Moro of Samafo and Cawo sought refuge in Tolo from attacks by inhabitants of a settlement named Tobelo, situated eight miles inland.³⁴ Fifty years later, two Tobelo settlements are mentioned, Tobelo-tia [Tobelo landward] and Tobelo-tai [Tobelo seaward]. Both were located in the interior, out of reach of the rulers of Gamkonora and Ternate.³⁵ In 1686, Tobelo-tia was located at the shores of a lake (presumably Lake Lina) in the north of Kau district. The settlement was divided into eight areas (Dutch *wijken*), and subject to the ruler of Gamkonora, who was represented by a *hukum*.³⁶ The same source situated Tobelo-tai at one hour sailing south from Galela.³⁷ On a map drawn by Isaac de Graaff, the last cartographer of the United East Indies Company (VOC),³⁸ only three settlements along the east coast of the northern peninsula are given: Galeta (Galela), Tomueway (at the site of the present Tobelo village of Mawea), and Tubella (Tobelo), situated in the area where van Dam placed Tobelo-tia.³⁹

We can thus reconstruct the following development. In the late sixteenth century, a single settlement Tobelo was situated in the hinterland

³²Xavier, in Schurhammer 1963: 775.

³³Xavier, in Schurhammer 1963: 763.

³⁴Schurhammer 1963: 775.

³⁵Hustaert 1656, in van Fraassen 1980: 122.

³⁶Our source does not seem to have visited the place. Witness his statement that “hun getal soude bestaen uit 600 weerbare mannen” (van Dam 1936: 110–112), but may have gathered his information from Lobs, which dates from 1662–1668 (van Fraassen, pers. comm.).

³⁷Van Dam 1936: 111

³⁸The map is dated by the editor at “the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century.” Since de Graaff never visited Halmahera, his information is likely to stem from Lobs as well, dating from 1662–1668. See note 36.

³⁹That Tobelo-tai lost its suffix -tai (“seaward”) accords with the distinction made in 1680 between Tobelo and Tobelo-tia in *Dagh-register* 1680: 674, in van Fraassen 1980: 122.

of the Moro villages of Tolo and Cawa.⁴⁰ Its population split into two communities between 1606 and 1656. Both communities were located in the interior until, sometime before 1686, one of them moved to the coast to occupy the no-man's-land where once the Moro settlements had been situated. There they established a settlement, Tobelo(-tai), to which at the end of the seventeenth century the coastal settlement of Mawea was added. The other community, Tobelo-tia, remained situated at Lake Lina.

It is only in 1855 that the name Tobelo reappears, when the inhabitants of the “kampong Tobello” refused to deliver a “pirate” named Laba to the commander of the Dutch armored vessel *Vesuvius*. The latter ordered the bombardment of the settlement. On its site, known as Berera ma nguku (‘burnt settlement’ in Tobelo), the present-day village of Gamhoku (‘burnt settlement’ in Ternaten) is situated. After the destruction of kampong Tobello, its inhabitants were resettled in the coastal plain opposite the isle of Kumo, where the Dutch governor of Maluku ordered a new settlement to be founded. It was called Berera ma hungi (‘new settlement’ in Tobelo), which is now known under its Ternaten name Gamsungi (with the same meaning). But by that time Tobelo settlements had already spread along the coast of the present-day district (*kecamatan*) of Tobelo and part of the island of Morotai.

In 1856, the population of Tobelo district numbered 1831 people, who were said to have formerly lived in nine domains (*negeri*), of which only four were still inhabited, namely, Liena (Lina), Liebatto (Huboto), Laboewah-lamo (Hibua-lamo), and Nomo (Momulati); the other *negeri* had been added to these four and have “ceased to bear the name *negeri*.”⁴¹ This reduction from nine to four domains was later attributed to the Dutch administration. Campen reported in 1883 that the original nine *negeri* were Katana, Mawea, Patja, Jaro, Saboea lamo, Lina, Sibotto, Momulati, and Mede, but that “our administration first made a

⁴⁰The memory of a single Tobelo settlement was still alive in Ternate in the last century. Willer reports in 1858 information from the Ternaten court saying that in former times there were seven independent petty states in the northern peninsula of Halmahera, namely, Jailolo and Loloda, each subject to a kolano; Sahu, Tobaru, Tolofuo, and Kau, subject to a sangaji; and Tabello and Galela, which were “large villages with their own administration independent from Gamkonora” (Willer 1858: 40).

⁴¹Aantekeningen 1856: 224. Tobias (1980: 62) maintained (writing in 1857) that Tobelo constituted only a single *negorij*.

arbitrary division into seven, then one into five, and now ... a division into four *negeri*, has been established.”⁴² These four negeri, that is Momulatti, Lina, Sibotto, and Saboea Lamo, together formed the capital (Dutch *hoofplaats*) Tobello.⁴³ In addition, Campen listed twenty-four Tobelo settlements, almost all of which bear the same name as the river or coastal bend where they were situated. And one century later, in the early 1980s, these are the main features by which Tobelo identify their territorial order: twenty-two settlements, virtually all situated along the coast and carrying the same name as streams, rivers, or bays in their vicinity, are grouped into four (or five) territorial domains (*ma hoana*), named Lina, Huboto, Momulati, and Hibua Lamo (the latter having split off from and virtually replaced Gura). Together, these domains constitute *o Tobeloh’oka manga ngi* ‘the territory of the Tobeloho’.

The “history” of Tobelo

Let us now turn to a sample of the myths in which some of these historical data emerge again. The following myth (M-O)⁴⁴ serves as a reference myth and is therefore presented in extenso. I have divided the text in numbered paragraphs to facilitate the comparative analysis presented below.

1. According to the elders, the Tobelo, Galela, and the Loloda too, the whole of Halmahera (*termasuk Halmahera*), we all descend from Johor in Melaka. There was one sultan in Johor in Melaka named Pakualam. He had three sons: Wajamin, Sarjamin, and Gadyadeanga. The eldest, Wajamin, was destined to replace his father and to become raja in turn.
2. Actually he did not want to, he preferred to go abroad. Therefore he asked his father if he would give him some people (*rakyat*) and tools, such as a *lela*, that is a small cannon, to go abroad. Thereupon he departed, bringing his luggage, it was not so much.⁴⁵

⁴²Campen 1883: 309. Riedel (1885) presented the same list.

⁴³Campen 1883: 309–310. The Dutch resident of Ternate, de Clercq (1889: 205), repeated this fourfold division.

⁴⁴I recorded this myth in Indonesian on 22 January 1980 from Mr. Joel Kitong in Leleoto village.

⁴⁵Question to the informant: “He brought one cannon?” Answer: “Yes, several cannons, and people.” Question: “Did he also take gongs?” Answer: “Perhaps he

3. So in the days they departed there was in the district of Oba [at the southern tip of Halmahera] an area named Juangana Uba-uba, and there they became Tobelo. Yes, for when their canoe stranded there, it is said that the sultan asked “what happens, where are we?” They said: “Yes, we have run ashore.” And so we had become *belo* [Tobelo ‘stake’], for the people who disembarked became a stake, they became a stake to attach the canoe to. For at that moment when they disembarked they became stakes (*belo*). From then on, these people were called Tobelo people. In truth it is Tabeloho, then it was varied (*divariasi*) to become Tobelo. But in fact it comes from the word Tabeloho.
4. After they had run ashore, they repaired the canoe, to depart again and arrive at Dodinga. From Dodinga they walked straight to Bobane Igo. From Bobane Igo they started to enter, to enter the forest. They entered the forest to descend at the shore of Lake Lina. So when they arrived there, that lake already existed. That lake was already there.
5. They stayed there, and they started to organize (*mengatur*) the domains (*soa*), the places to stay. So that unto this day, when one goes to Lake Lina, there are old people who can point out where the place of the people of Lina is, that of the people of Gura, of the people of Huboto, of Momulati, and Hibua Lamo.
6. At that time, the sultan [Wajamin] had no children yet. Then after some time he had a daughter—her name the elders have not mentioned, so I do not know it. That daughter married a Tobaru man. When she was a girl she married a Tobaru. In those days the Tobaru people were already in Ibu. They had begun to make a living earlier, in the middle part of the northern peninsula of Halmahera. Whenever people say that the Tobaru people originate from Sulawesi, that is true indeed.⁴⁶
7. So the son-in-law of the sultan originated (*berasal*) from Tobaru people. Then the Tobaru began to come to his place. I suspect that with the sultan’s son-in-law, people came to work together in that area. But at that time, the sangaji of Ibu [was] not yet [there]; or the

brought those too, for in the year—what was it?—I had an elder brother who brought gongs.”

⁴⁶Question: “That means that the Tobelo do not originate from the same place as the Tobaru?” Answer: “They have no connection.”

sultan Ternate did not know yet that there was a sultan with so many people at the Lake. He did not know yet.

8. Thereupon there was a certain sangaji, from Gamkonora, who climbed the mountain Gamkonora. Indeed, that is the highest mountain in Halmahera. He looked, and when he had ascended he heard gongs and drums. Immediately he wanted to find out why there were gongs and drums in that area. He looked at the lake, "Ah!, there are houses there." That means that there is already a settlement. From then on that sangaji reported to the Sultan Ternate. So the Sultan Ternate came to find out. But it was not the sultan himself; he sent a representative (*utusan*). They came down from between Bori and Pediwang, and entered the interior to find out.
9. Thereupon friendship developed between Ternate and Tobelo. As part of that friendship, indeed as a tie of friendship, Sultan Tobelo sent coconut oil while the Sultan Ternate sent *tomasi*, that is fish stomach filled with lots of salt. So when they came from Ternate with their canoes, they went home with coconut oil. So there was friendship between Sultan Tobelo and Sultan Ternate.
10. At one time Sultan Ternate asked Sultan Tobelo to meet him in Ternate. Sultan Tobelo agreed. So Sultan Tobelo went to Ternate. He climbed the stairs of the palace (*kedaton*) of Sultan Ternate. In those days, when one approached a sultan one had to take off one's shoes and so on. This sultan [Tobelo] left his sandals behind. Actually, the sandals of Sultan Tobelo had gold all over. When he had ascended [the stairs], people saw those sandals. "Our own sultan himself does not have such ones. Tobelo's are much more beautiful." And they were stolen. Thereupon Sultan Tobelo departed for home.
11. Then, so it is said, Sultan Ternate no longer sent *tomasi*, but in his greed began to collect all people's cloths and objects. Then ill feelings started to grow.
12. Nevertheless, Sultan Ternate still made an effort to make the relationship close. So Sultan Ternate himself came to invite Sultan Tobelo not to stay in the forest, but to please come out [of the forest] between Bori and Pediwang. There is a small river there, resembling the river in Ternate, at the sultan's court, named Santosa. So the sultan saw this and said, "This is a good river, for its name is Santosa." To this day, this river, just a small one, is named Santosa.

13. In those days there was indeed friendship between Sultan Ternate and Tobelo, but Tobelo was still cautious. The sultan [Tobelo] had already begun to instruct his people.
14. So because at this lake, because the Gamkonora people, that is to say, the sangaji Gamkonora had seen that there were already so many people's troops at Lake Lina, therefore the people of Tobelo and Galela thought that next they would be besieged, there would be war.
15. And by that time, that part of the army that consisted of the Galela people (*suku*) fled, leaving the sultan [Tobelo] behind and taking with them all the cannons and other things. Later they arrived at a mountain named Ruruku, and there a part of them could no longer bear it, so that they were compelled to descend to Loloda. So this name of the Loloda people (*bangsa*), the origin of this word is *loda*. *Loda* means 'to flee'.
16. So the Galela people (*suku*) themselves had already split. One part had to go out [of the forest] in the district (*kecamatan*) Loloda, another part came out first at Dokulamo village, all the way to Ngidiho. They settled there in a soa called soa Ngahi.
17. So after the people (*rakyat*) had separated, the rest that consisted of the Tobelo people (*suku*) went out [of the forest] between Pidiwang and what's-its-name, at the invitation of Sultan Ternate; this friendship required that again. But there was no longer confidence, and finally Sultan [Tobelo] entered [the forest] again to settle around Lake Paca. There he also settled, and there are many signs. Those shells, so many shells, there are many seashells. If we would go there
18. But they did not feel safe there either, and the influence from Ternate was strongly felt. As a result they went out [of the forest] and scattered, first from Paca here all the way to Uri. Uri lies in between Efi-efi and Tomahalu. In short, Tomahalu is now called Uri.
19. According to the tales, the Ternate people gave the name Uri, because the joints of the houses of the Tobelo inhabitants were tied with rotan, which the Ternate people call *uri*. Up to this day, these people say *ya falanya ma bobodiku uri fara-fara*. Those people speak like that.
20. Now they had arrived at Paca, the Ternaten people had tools for catching fish. Here we call that *kofo*. And the area where one can catch fish with this *kofo* tool lies between Paca and Kupa-kupa.

There is plenty of fine fish, *make*, it is in abundance. So the [Ternate] people instructed, saying “Let us go *paca*!” *Paca* means net or line to be dragged. That is called *paca* in Ternate language. In the end, this village was called *Paca*.

21. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Tobelo and the sultan did not feel at ease. Finally, Sultan Tobelo begot a son, whose name was Rutuku. He was born in Gamhoku. Because they had begun to search for a good place, well, Gamhoku was one. At Gamhoku they had built a good village, an orderly (*teratur*) one.
22. But at that time Sultan Ternate was also very suspicious. Ternate was already under the authority of the Kompeni [United Dutch East India Company]. And with the Kompeni’s force they came to attack the inhabitants of Tobelo. In the end, Sultan Wajamin and his people vanished straight-away, entered into the forest.
23. But thereupon they came out again at Gamhoku. And they thought as follows: ya, Ternate already uses modern tools (*alat-alat modern*) — at that time they were already under Dutch leadership so there were weapons, guns too, larger cannons—so they looked for a place to take shelter. If, for instance, a ship came and could not harbor close by, ya, that would be good. And so the inhabitants and the sultan moved to Tobelo, which is now the capital of Tobelo [district].
24. And this village is now located where the radio station is in Tobelo. That is called Gamsungi. The Ternate people gave it that name too; it means ‘new settlement’. (The name of) the settlement Gamhoku means ‘burnt settlement’. Its old name was Tabalingo. The word tabalingo means ‘immigrant people’ (*orang pendatang*), that is, in the Tobelo language, *ngohi to boino* (“I come this way”). Actually it is *tabaino*, and later it was embellished as Tabalingo; in fact it is *tabaino*.
25. Those who then went to stay in Gamsungi, in what is now the Capital town of this district, those people considered that since there were so many islands scattered in front, perhaps [war] ships could not come close again. So that even the shots fired from the ship would not matter. But as it turned out, the guns fired from afar could still reach [the coast]. So they searched for a place and began to appoint officials (*pegawai*), for instance, Tolonuo village appointed a sangaji. That sangaji was named Kibo. Unto this day, when you go to Tolonuo you can ask where Kibo stayed.

26. By now [Ternaten] people planned to attack Tolonuo. Because there was a stronghold there, the sultan and his people all moved to that somewhat inaccessible area. That was the area of Mede. There are many rocks there, called the Ruko area. There the fighting broke out again. That was the final battle. In the end, according to the sultan's son named Rutuku, they disappeared unto this day.
27. Rutuku had a son again, named Papua. He too had descendants, that Papua, and those descendants, sir, if I should mention that, I would be embarrassed, yes, I would be very embarrassed, for we are the descendants of that child. Until the time, people were selected to be appointed sangaji by Sultan Ternate so that the people themselves would have leaders.

[The myth ends by describing the descent relations between Papua and the speaker, who is the grandson of the last hereditary sangaji of Tobelo district.]

Comparison

Let us examine the successive paragraphs of this myth M-0, in comparison with five variants (M-1, M-2, M-3, M-4, and M-5).⁴⁷ In §1, M-0 attributes a foreign origin to the Tobelo, Galela, and Loloda by presenting them as the descendants of the retinue of Wajamin, heir apparent to the throne of Sultan Pakualam "of Melaka." His younger brothers are called Sarjamin and Gadyadeanga. M-1 confirms this in its first sentence: "The raja Aijamin came from there, from Melaka." M-2 situates the region of Tobelo origin in the Philippines;⁴⁸ so does M-3, attributing this origin to a "king" named Kadjadian, who in M-0 is the younger brother

⁴⁷I recorded M-1 in North Malukan Malay from Mr. Palekar Rorano, in Mawea village, on 14 May 1980. M-2, M-3, and M-4, all in fragmentary form, have been reported by the missionary Anton Hueting (1921: 224–240), and M-5 by Voorhamme (1935).

⁴⁸"We originate from the land of Sekel, of the Manila people. We arrived here on rafts. One raft stranded on Golauku, close to Morotai. Seven rafts went on straight to Tobu. There one disembarked and went on straight to Lake Lina." (Hueting 1921: 226)

(Gadyadeanga) of Wajamin.⁴⁹ Finally, M-5 speaks of a ruler of Javanese origin named Kedjadian.

M-0 also represents this foreign origin in objects. §2 tells how Wajamin receives from his father permission to take with him both people and objects. The speaker tells of cannons, but when questioned adds gongs. The Galela will be named after the cannon (*lela*), once they have separated from the Tobelo. M-4 emphasizes that, whereas all inhabitants of Halmahera originate from abroad, only Tobelo and Galela had brought objects with them, namely, two giant gongs and a cannon respectively. It also confirms that, once the Galela had separated from the people as a whole, they derived their name from the cannon as their share in the original heirloom.⁵⁰

M-0 proceeds in §3 by saying that, upon arrival in Halmahera, the Tobelo, Galela, and Loloda peoples still form one people, represented in several variants as the crew of a single large canoe (called *juangana*). It is on the arrival of this canoe that both the landing site and the people as a whole receive their name. Following instructions from their ruler, the people hold the canoe in the floodline, acting as “stakes” (Tobelo *belo*), which enables their ruler to disembark in the land of Halmahera. The name given to the site in M-0, Juangana uba-uba, is interpreted thus in M-4.

[All] the inhabitants of Halmahera, being lost at sea, floated ashore above Gane, at the southern tip of the southern peninsula, at a site still called Juangana ruba-ruba (Tern: *juangana* means a large type of canoe, *ruba-ruba* means to fall over, to be shipwrecked).⁵¹

⁴⁹M-3 tells how all Tobelo under the leadership of a man called Tingidu live around Lake Lina, together with a “king named Kadjadian who had come from Manilla” (Hueting 1921: 226ff.).

⁵⁰The relevant passage in M-4 (Hueting 1921: 224–225) reads: “The Galela had brought as their part of the heritage from the shipwrecked canoe a cannon (*lela*), and the Tobelo two giant gongs. Having arrived at the isthmus of Pajahe, the northern border of the southern peninsula, the Galela were unable to carry the cannon, and left it behind at the mountain that unto this day is called Bukuspera (Tern: *buku* means mountain, *uspera* means cannon).” The Galela later claim one of the two gongs that were Tobelo’s *harta*; they leave taking one of those with them, leaving that object behind too on a mountaintop, named Lahia, “which is there up to the present day.”

⁵¹Hueting 1921: 224.

The name “canoe-turned-upwards” suggests that this act of disembarking marks an inverted relationship. Indeed, the significance of the people’s task, instrumental in the construction of a relationship between the foreign ruler and the local land, is acknowledged in the bestowal, by the ruler upon his people, of a new identity expressed in the name Tobelo. M-1 presents this theme in a virtually identical way.

First he (sailed) upwards (*ke atas*) to Majioli in Halmahera. Having arrived there, night fell, the storm blew, it rained. So this raja Aijamin ordered his people to land the canoe there. In local language, one says “plant that *belo* [stake]” to tie the canoe to. In Tobelo language, one says *o ngotiri ya beloho*. So the people there [were] not *beloho*, [it was] just the stakes of the canoe. When it had become light, the raja asked: “Why do you not ask for the canoe to land, you just keep on holding it.” So if presently we will arrive at an empty piece of land, we will settle there, we will stay there and give the name of Tobelo people.

M-3 attributes the name-giving role to the sangaji of Gamkonora, who left with a part of the Tobelo people

in a great canoe (*juangana*). At Cape Jere the sangaji ordered the people to tie (*belo*) the canoe, but they held on to it, therefore [the people were called] Tobelo. He brought the canoe to Linga, which therefore became a Tobelo colony.⁵²

At this point in the story M-0, “Tobelo” still refers to the people (*rakyat*) as a whole, and the fissions taking place later will be rendered as a division of the objects, originating from the same foreign source and brought along in the canoe-turned-upwards.

In §4, M-0 describes the journey in which the ruler leads the Tobelo people from Gane, at the southern tip of Halmahera, via the isthmus of central Halmahera into the interior of the northern peninsula, where they reach Lake Lina. There the ruler “organizes” (*atur*) the Tobelo by dividing them into the five domains (*hoana*) of Lina, Gura, Huboto, Momulati, and Hibua Lamo. M-1 presents a similar journey, but adds that the migrating party meets other people at the Kau river (situated in the southern part of the northern peninsula) who apparently do not share the same origin. The ruler of Tobelo then asks the local “lord of the land” (*tuan tanah*) “where there is empty land around here.” The latter directs

⁵²Huetting 1921: 227.

them to Lake Lina. In explicitly differentiating between the ruler and his people from abroad, on the one side, and a representative of the autochthonous people who wields authority over the local soil, on the other, M-1 presents the dyarchical structure of authority, familiar throughout eastern Indonesia, involving a ruler of foreign descent representing the sociopolitical order, and a local “Lord of the Land” who grants access to the land.

Other variants, however, relegate the creation of this dyarchy to a later point in history, by stipulating that both the lake and the order of *hoana* did not yet exist. For instance, whereas M-4, like M-0, tells how “they continued their journey to the area where is now the Lake of Gura or Lina, in the interior of Kau district,” it adds, “there were many sago palms, but the lake did not yet exist. So although there was plenty of food they were not satisfied, they wanted to live along the shore.”⁵³ M-1, on the other hand, relates that the lake was already there, but that they immediately moved on to the shore. Both M-1 and M-4 remain silent about the establishment of the *hoana* order. What would account for this disagreement between the variants on the presence of water and of the *hoana* order in the interior?

Elsewhere⁵⁴ I have discussed a different set of North Halmaheran myths that render the construction of society as resulting from exchanges between local and immigrant people. These myths reveal that lakes and rivers are conceived to be the locus of the ancestral “images” of a given society. The mythical exchanges concerned involve the transfer of water in exchange for the fertility of the bride, thereby achieving a particular hierarchical order between ancestral “image” and “fertility” as fundamental values of society. These myths stipulate that failure to establish this hierarchical order results in various transformations: lakes dry out or start to flood, people are killed and their blood turns into a river. To claim access then to a local source of water articulates a claim to a certain localized identity in an ancestral “image” in relation to the overall *hoana* order. Up to this day, the sociopolitical division of Tobelo society into *hoana* is expressed as a ranked order among their respective ancestral territories and the rivers or lakes that identify them.⁵⁵ The disagree-

⁵³Hueting 1921: 225.

⁵⁴Platenkamp 1988.

⁵⁵Compare the following myth recorded by Hueting (1921: 230–231; my edition—JP):

ment, therefore, among the variant versions about the presence, at this point in “history,” of a lake and the *hoana* order in the interior reflects the problem of how to relate the *foreign* ancestral origin, attributed to the Tobelo ruler, to a *local* source of water. As such, it anticipates the episodes that follow, in which the myths gradually transform the position of the immigrant ruler and his retinue by relating them to other foreign rulers.

M-0 takes the first step in that direction in §6, where it is related how the ruler of Tobelo acts as wife-giver to a youth from the Tobaru people. It is stressed that the latter are not of the same origin as the Tobelo, but instead originate from Sulawesi. The boy’s relatives then join the Tobelo “to work together.” This is a curious message, given the fact that, according to my informants, the relations between the Tobelo and the Tobaru people have always been extremely hostile, and marriages between

The Tobelo lived along the river Tonguis, the Kau Tobelo along the river Boeng, while the people of (*hoana*) Gura lived on an island in the lake [Gura/Lina?]. Gura wanted to bathe in the river [Tonguis], but were not allowed to do so by the head of (*hoana*) Lina. When they did so nonetheless, “the wrath of the spirits was evoked so that the river fell dry.” The head of Lina thereupon evoked the spirits as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| “Babaua nyawa belo | The Tobelo people are fatherless |
| kagungu ma nyare-nyare | The canoes lie dry |
| to ma buku ma liketo | at the sides of the mountain |
| Dome ma lako | at the source of the river Dome |
| Boki mi ake | the water of Boki |

This brought back the water.”

Hueting quotes another invocation designed to prevent drought:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “Telaga Gura i otu | The Lake of Gura is dry |
| buru ka yo linga-linga | The shrimps crawl over the land |
| fo sidagi budi koga | which wisdom must be applied |
| Jou ma bala i lomo | The Lord’s people have gathered |
| Ya rara sidutu | The four kindreds |
| ka ma ngongaje ya reua | There is no message |
| suba ka fo airani | one bows in wonder |

These lines attest to the idea that the conflation of *hoana* identity, ritually expressed in having access to the same ancestral locus of water, is what provokes the drought. (As such, it is a modality of the theme of incest; cf. Platenkamp 1990).

them out of the question.⁵⁶ And yet, the marriage relationship is a turning point in this myth. In relating the ruler as wife-giver to a people of Sulawesi origin who move into his territory, the myth succeeds in transforming the ruler's structural position from that of a foreign immigrant into that of a ruler of autochthonous people. In these terms, the ruler articulates his superiority: his Tobaru son and other relatives-in-law join him to "cooperate," and it is immediately stressed that the Tobaru "had no sultan." Once the position of the Tobelo ruler has thus been transformed, the scene is set for the second major part of the myth. The sangaji of Gamkonora climbs a mountain to hear drums and gongs and concludes "that there must be people there." This he reports to the sultan of Ternate, who sends an official (*utusan*) to "enter the interior" and find out.

Note that M-0 does not speak of the sangaji actually seeing the people. M-4 elaborates upon this point, and it is worth an extensive quote.

Until the lake [of Lina] had come into existence, the Tobelo had not yet been in contact with the world beyond. Then came the sangaji of Gamkonora, by the name of Ramedi, to hunt in the vicinity of the [Tobelo] settlement. He could not see the Tobelo yet, since these knew how, like the Moroka, to turn themselves invisible. The sangaji, however, heard the chickens cackle, and his dogs started to bark, so that he suspected that he was in the vicinity of people. Since he could not find them, he went back to collect his dogs and returned to the spot. He hid himself from view, but his dogs started to fight with the Tobelo dogs. The Tobelo, angry to see so many dogs, came forward and beat the strange dogs. But then the sangaji came out of his hiding place, and *since now a stranger had seen the Tobelo*, the magic [Dutch *betovering*] of turning oneself invisible had been broken.⁵⁷

Variant M-4 thus articulates what is only hinted at in M-0. The "visibility" of the Tobelo people is a function of their existence actually being witnessed and acknowledged by (a representative of) a "strange" ruler. In the absence of this relationship, the Tobelo are like the Moro people, invisible to the outside world. Moreover, the Tobelo exodus to the coast,

⁵⁶In fact, myths describe how the Tobaru abduct a Tobelo woman, whereupon the Tobelo kill all Tobaru except a brother and sister, so that "all the Tobaru descend from and repeat incestuous marriages." Compare note 31.

⁵⁷Hueting 1921: 228–229; emphasis added.

which follows upon this acknowledgment—and deprives them of the cover of the forest—leads them into two different directions, following different river courses. And M-4 relates how this results in a new social differentiation (namely, between the Tobelo and the Tobelo Boeng). The visibility of the Tobelo people, being a function of the “strange ruler” acknowledging their existence, brings about a primordial social order among them.

Let us return to M-0. In §9, the relation between the Tobelo ruler and the newly acquainted ruler of Ternate initially takes the form of a mutual exchange of gifts. Tobelo provides coconut oil and Ternate provides fish and salt in return. In their gifts, the Tobelo are no longer associated with their overseas origin, but with the land—a shift we observed to be foreshadowed by the “turning-up of the canoe” upon their arrival in Halmahera, by the bestowal of a name upon them that no longer testifies to their foreign origin, and by the Tobelo ruler acting as wife-giver to the Tobaru people. Ternate, on the other hand, communicates in the nature of its gifts (produce of the sea) its structural position as the “ruler from overseas” in whose eyes the Tobelo have acquired visibility.

Up to this point, however, Ternate exercises no authority over Tobelo yet. Variant M-1, arriving at the moment when the ruler Aijamin has led his Tobelo people from the interior to the coast, stresses the same point.

Sultan Ternate still only ruled Ternate itself. Raja Tidore, he had a kingdom extending to what up to this day is the province of Irian Barat. But the peoples (*bangsa*) had not yet completed the history that I am telling you about.

The compiler of M-0 in fact suggests that the ruler of Tobelo is superior to the ruler of Ternate in terms of the prestige goods he possesses. He relates in §10 that, when the ruler of Tobelo visits the ruler of Ternate, he wears gold embroidered sandals that “are much more beautiful” than those owned by the Ternaten ruler. The subsequent theft of these sandals leads to the first disruption of the exchange relationship: the ruler of Ternate no longer sends fish and salt to Tobelo.

Variant M-5 elaborates upon this rupture. It situates the events in a period when Ternate had already appointed a sangaji (by the name of Kibo) over the Tobelo and their ruler Kedjadian. It names the gifts due to Ternate: the eggs of the *meleo* and *mamua* birds, coconut oil, and rice—gifts that qualify in Tobelo as “living” (eggs, rice) or “cooked” (coconut oil) produce of the land. After the theft of the sandals, the sangaji decides

to replace this gift of foodstuffs from the land, and to send instead “two earthenware vessels filled with feces” to Ternate. This change of gifts signifies a radical transformation of the relationship. To identify oneself through the nature of one’s gift with dead and decaying matter recurs in other Tobelo myths, as well as in the context of the pre-Christian Tobelo mortuary rituals. In the latter, it marks the first phase in the process of transforming the dead into ancestors, when the “image” (Tobelo *gurumini*) of the deceased is explicitly desocialized, and transferred into the realm of the *moroka*, beyond the domain of the village society, where this “image” should “lose its smell of decay.”⁵⁸ This process of desocialization marks the relation between Tobelo and Ternate at this point in M-0 as well. It manifests itself as the termination of the exchanges. In §11 it is told how, following the disruption of the exchange relationship, the ruler of Ternate, being driven by “greed,” starts “collecting all people’s cloth and objects.” Instead of being exchanged, wealth is being hoarded, and this foreshadows the final transformation of Tobelo into Moro.

The compiler of M-0 carefully describes the successive events that will eventually lead to war. He pictures the role of the ruler of Ternate in remarkably ambivalent terms. In spite of the obvious deterioration of the relationship, the ruler “still made an effort to make the relationship close” by inducing the Tobelo to emerge from the forest. He names the river located at the site where the Tobelo reach the coast and where they become visible to the outside world after the river Santosa that flows through his Ternaten courtyard. He thus identifies his court as the original locus of Tobelo “visibility.” (We have seen how M-4 attributes this role to the sangaji of Gamkonora.) The relationship nevertheless remains ambivalent. “In those days,” says §13, “there was indeed friendship be-

⁵⁸Platenkamp 1992. This withdrawal from social interaction, marked by the presentation of feces as a nongift, is also expressed in a myth about the disruption of relations between the Tobelo *hoana* of Lina and Momulati: “A Lina girl was married to a Momulati boy. The boy committed a capital crime. He fled. Then the elder and younger brothers of the girl took the blame upon themselves and they, instead of the Momulati people, were punished accordingly. Since then, the Momulati people can no longer take the Lina people to court. When they do, the Lina people await them with a fan with chicken feces spread on top.”

tween Sultan Ternate and Tobelo, but [the ruler of] Tobelo was still cautious.”

The impending war with Ternate first brings about the differentiation of the Tobelo people into three different societies. The following paragraphs of M-0 describe how one section flees, taking from the original heirlooms the cannons (*lela*) from which they derive their name Galela. Part of the Galela split off again to “flee” (*loda*) in the direction of a region that is then named Loloda. The Tobelo, however, do not stay to confront Ternate either. §17 tells how, still mistrusting Ternate’s intentions, they once more seek the shelter of the forest, to emerge again and scatter over different coastal settlements, such as Paca, Efi-efi, Tomahalu, and Uri. Each time they emerge at the coast, the sites receive Ternaten names. Finally, after repeated attempts, the “orderly settlement” (*kampung teratur*) of Gamhoku is established along the coast by the son of the Tobelo ruler.

A description of the assault, expected for so long, is given in M-0, §22. Ternate, supported by Dutch troops, launches an attack against Gamhoku. “In the end,” says the myth, “Sultan Wajamin and his people vanished straight-away, entered into the forest,” to emerge again later, still facing an enemy who commands superior firepower. The paragraphs that follow relate the dramatic attempts of the Tobelo to find sheltered places for settlement along the coast and, in the process, the myth enumerates the villages that make up the social topography of Tobelo society. The whole pattern of the Tobelo territorial organization, with its Ternaten village names, unfolds in response to the war brought upon them by Ternate. M-0 explains in §25 that this establishment of territorial order entails the appointment of officials (*pegawai*), including a sangaji named Kibo (who also appears in M-5).

After the final battle, Kibo and his Tobelo people disappear “up to this day.” M-1 makes explicit that the Tobelo ruler and his people have become invisible and turned into the Moro people. A similar conclusion is reached in M-5: “In consultation with the ruler Kedjadian, the sangaji [Kibo] decided to disappear with his people.” Voorhamme comments that “this sudden disappearance lives on in the imagination [Dutch *verbeelding*]; inexplicable things are attributed to the Moro people [*moro*”

means ‘disappeared’]. The settlement of Kibo is up to this day honored as a blessed place.”⁵⁹

The cosmological valorization of historical events

The historical sources mention that, prior to the final disappearance of the Moro population from the east coast of the northern peninsula and from Morotai, the Tobelo, Tobaru, and Galela people had repeatedly raided the Moro settlements along the east coast. And since the Galela, the Tobaru, and the Tobelo populations appear not to have suffered from the deportations that eventually annihilated Moro society, it would seem that they formed separate societies and were well acquainted with each other’s existence. When the Tobelo in the course of the seventeenth century began to leave their inland settlements to move into the coastal areas, they were obviously aware of occupying lands that once belonged to the Moro.

Up to the present, this awareness manifests itself in the widespread North Halmahera idea that the *moroka* are the “true owners” (Tobelo *ma dutu*) of the land.⁶⁰ Among the Tobelo, *moroka* contrast with the members of the village society as the “people who lived here long ago.” Their authority must be ritually acknowledged before one cultivates the soil. They also command realms in the skies and the forests—domains beyond the village society proper—where through pre-Christian shamanistic rituals the “images” (Tobelo *gurumini*) of the deceased must be transferred in order to lose “its smell of decay,” before it can be reincorporated as ancestral “images” into the village society. By incorporating the *moroka* as a category in their cosmology, the Tobelo have thus preserved in their collective memory references to a society that disappeared

⁵⁹Voorhamme 1935.

⁶⁰The Tobelo word *moroka*, designating a category of spiritual beings, is constructed from *moro* and the locative suffix *oka*, and may be glossed ‘inhabitants of Moro’. *Moroka* are marked by a series of specific features. They are invisible beings, believed to inhabit invisible settlements and cultivating invisible gardens in the forest. Capable of perceiving human beings, they are known to play tricks upon them: they change stellar constellations and the flow of rivers so that travellers lose their way. They enter shops where they purchase goods with money that turns invisible as soon as they leave. They have no recognizable faces nor personal names, and their bodies do not produce the smells associated with ordinary human bodily functions.

from Northeast Halmahera almost four centuries ago. They myths examined here reveal how this process of incorporation is structured. They also reveal its fundamental importance for the conceptualization of the relationship that connects Tobelo society to the Ternate sultanate.

The process is initiated by attributing a singular, foreign origin to all societies of the eastern part of the northern peninsula of Halmahera. Those people, who eventually will be differentiated into the peoples of Tobelo, Galela, Loloda, and Moro, are all said to originate in a foreign kingdom (Melaka, Java, or the Philippines). Their arrival in Halmahera signifies an inversion, whereby the people receive the new name of “Tobelo.” This inversion is the first step in a process of transformation, whereby the immigrant ruler and his people are assigned the position of autochthons. Fundamental is the idea that once they occupy the position of autochthonous people, the ruler and his retinue are invisible to and do not partake in the outside world. Concomitantly, they lack the socio-territorial order of *hoana* domains associated with the waters of lakes and rivers. They must be *seen* by (a representative of) a ruler of different origin before their existence becomes “visible” to the world at large. The ensuing sociality manifests itself in an interaction that initially assumes the character of a balanced reciprocity, wherein the autochthonous people act as the givers of “living” products of the land and the foreign ruler as giver of sea products.

In the subsequent breakdown of this exchange relationship, the historical events make their first appearance in the myths. We observed above that during the sixteenth century the Moro settlements were expected to pay tribute—primarily in foodstuffs—to the Ternaten sultanate, a tribute already contested by other sultanates in the region. This relationship was disrupted when the Portuguese not only converted the heads of the Moro settlements to Christianity and supplied them with prestigious garments as rewards, but also sought to secure the Moro agricultural produce for themselves. The violent retaliations of Ternate and other sultanates against the Moro settlements may have been designed to regain control over these resources. But if the myths indeed refer to this episode, then they suggest an additional, and perhaps more fundamental, motivation. The myths valorize the *tributary* relationship—as it is presented by the Portuguese sources—as a *reciprocal* transfer of gifts between Tobelo (still encompassing “all peoples of Halmahera”) and Ternate. This relationship provides the Halmaheran peoples with a visible

social identity vis-à-vis the outside world, and it is in terms of this social “image” that the subsequent breakdown of the exchange relationship is interpreted. It is attributed neither to Portuguese interference in local tributary relations, nor to the conversion of the Moro to Christianity, but to Ternate’s refusal to accept the Halmaheran people’s claim to a superior image—a claim expressed in the attire of their ruler, “more beautiful” than that of the ruler of Ternate.⁶¹

The breakdown of the exchange relationship then leads to a transformation of the relationship. In one variant, Tobelo introduces this transformation by acting as the giver of dead matter—anticipating its eventual retreat from the society of the living by its transformation into the invisible *moroka*. Ternate, on the other hand, assumes a dual, contrasting identity. It emanates potential violence, and in response to this threat the Tobelo people as a whole are differentiated into the three societies (*suku*) of Tobelo, Galela, and Loloda. The relative position assigned to each of them is valorized in terms of their respective response to Ternate as the source of violence. However, Ternate also represents the agent that induces the Tobelo time and time again to leave the shelter of the forest and to accept Ternate as the referent signifying its unfolding socioterritorial order. The water marking the site where the Tobelo reach the coast for the first time is identified with the river flowing through the sultan’s courtyard; the Ternaten language provides names that identify the settlements established one after the other, extending the social topography of Tobelo society in the process; and Ternate is presented as the source of house-building and fishing technology. This unfolding order also entails a differentiation of authority between the ruler of Tobelo and a local sangaji by the name of Kibo. Remarkably, the variants in question (M-0, M-5) remain silent about the fact that this concerns a Ternaten institution as well, just as they ignore the role of the Dutch administration in the reorganization of the *hoana* order.

We observed earlier that, according to the historical sources, the exodus of the Tobelo to the coast occurred in the course of the seventeenth century, that is, long after the Moro village of Tolo had been destroyed

⁶¹One might speculate whether it was precisely Moro’s interaction with the Portuguese, who provided the Moro heads with rich garments “as a reward” for their conversion to Christianity and for allowing them access to their resources, that enabled Moro to express their claim to a superior “image” by wearing the “gold embroidered sandals” mentioned in the myth.

and the inhabitants of other Moro settlements had been killed or deported. The myths reverse this chronological order by situating these Tobelo migrations, and the ensuing socioterritorial order of coastal settlements, before the conclusion of the final battle that led to the defeat of part of the Tobelo and to their transformation into invisible *moroka*. At the same time, the myths refer to the Dutch participating in the battle by supporting Ternate with advanced firepower. In other words, the myths conflate the Ternaten attacks on Moro settlements in the sixteenth century with the Dutch bombardment of kampong Tobelo in 1855.

This rearrangement of the chronology of history is particularly significant. The myths suggest that, until the battle is fought, the coastal socioterritorial order of Tobelo fails to become permanent. At various times, the Tobelo move to the coast and then retreat into the forest, wavering between an existence in “orderly” coastal settlements, “visible” to Ternate as the source of signification, and an existence in the forest, where, hidden from view, they “are like the *moroka*.” This period of existential ambivalence only comes to an end when, in the final battle, those Tobelo who have taken part assume invisibility once and for all by turning into *moroka*. Only then is the separation final between the remaining Tobelo living in “orderly” coastal settlements, and the *moroka* existing in domains beyond.

The myths thus stipulate that the socioterritorial order of Tobelo society, valorized in relation to Ternate, can only acquire permanence on the condition that the relationship between the Tobelo and the *moroka* as a cosmological category has come into being. As such, *moroka* have become part of a cosmological system in which they contrast with the society of the living, ordered into villages and *hoana* domains. The *moroka*, on the other hand, having “lived here long ago,” by now represent a form of being that no longer partakes in the physical processes of human existence nor in the sociality of village life. Thus, whereas the Tobelo socioterritorial order with its constituent *hoana* is valorized in reference to the Ternaten sultanate, the *moroka*, as “true owners” of the land, represent a different realm altogether. There, “life” is contained in uncultivated lands and is not yet embodied in human beings or cultivated plants; and there each deceased human being will “lose its smell of decay,” returning into a state of nonsocial “invisibility,” before it can be reincorporated into society as an ancestral “image” proper. The relationship between both forms of existence, the “visible” social one, and the

“invisible” nonsocial one, is one of the foundations of Tobelo socio-cosmology. The myths discussed here have selected facts from history and rearranged their order, so that they would serve to convey this message.

REFERENCES

- Aantekeningen. 1856. Aantekeningen op eene reis aan do noord- en westkust van Halmaheira. *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië* 18(2): 209–228.
- Andaya, L. 1993. *The world of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the early modern period*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Campen, C. H. F. 1883. Het eiland Halmahera. *Tijdschrift van het Bataviaasch Genootschap* 28: 240–313.
- Clercq, F. S. A. de. 1889. Dodadi ma tau en Goma ma tau of zielehuisjes in het district Tobelo op Noord-Halmaheira. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* 2: 204–212.
- Dam, Pieter van. 1936. *Beschryvingen van de Oostindische Compagnie*, vol. 2, pt. 1, ed. by F. W. Stapel. 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff. (Originally published 1686.)
- Fraassen, Ch. F. van. 1980. Types of socio-political structure in North-Halmaheran history. In *Halmahera dan Raja Ampat: Konsep dan strategi penelitian*, ed. by E. K. M. Masinambow, pp. 87–150. Jakarta: Leknas-Lipi.
- Hueting, A. 1921. De Tobelorezen in hun denken en doen, pt. 1. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 77: 217–357.
- Morga, A. de. 1868. *The Philippine Islands, Moluccas, Siam, Cambodia, Japan, and China at the close of the sixteenth century*, trans. by H. E. J. Stanley. London: Hakluyt Society.
- Platenkamp, J. D. M. 1988. Myths of life and image in Northern Halmahera. In *Time past, time present, time future: Essays in Indonesian culture*, ed. by H. J. M. Claessen and E. S. Moyer, pp. 148–167. Dordrecht: Foris.
- . 1990. The severance of the origin: A ritual of the Tobelo of North Halmahera. In *Rituals and socio-cosmic order in eastern Indonesian societies*, pt. 2, *Maluku*, ed. by C. Barraud and J. D. M. Platenkamp, pp. 74–92. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* (special issue) 146, no. 1.
- . 1992. Transforming Tobelo ritual. In *Understanding rituals*, ed. by D. de Coppet, pp. 74–96. London: Routledge.
- Riedel, J. F. 1885. Galela und Tobeloresen. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 42: 58–89.
- Schurhammer, S. J. G. 1963. *Franz Xavier, sein Leben und seine Zeit*, vol. 2, pt. 1, *Indien und Indonesien 1541–1547*. Freiburg.

- Tiele, P. A. 1879. De Europeërs in den Maleischen Archipel, pt. 2, 1529–1540. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 26: 1–69.
- . 1880. De Europeërs in den Maleischen Archipel, pt. 3, 1541–1555. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 27: 260–340.
- Tobias, J. H. 1980. *Memorie van Overgave 1857*. Penerbitan sumber-sumber sejarah 11, Ternate. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia.
- Valentyn, F. 1724. *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, vol. 1, no. 2, *Uitvoerige beschrijving der vyf Moluccos*. Dordrecht/Amsterdam: van Braam & Onder de Linden.
- Villiers, J. 1983. The Jesuit mission in Moro 1546–1571. In *Halmahera dan Raja Ampat sebagai kesatuan majemuk: Studi-studi terhadap suatu daerah transisi*, ed. by E. K. M. Masinambow, pp. 277–288. Jakarta: Leknas-Lipi.
- Voorhamme, J. 1935. *Memorie van Overgave van de onderafdeling Tobelo 1935*. Typescript, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, Amsterdam.
- Wessels, C. 1935. *De katholieke missie in de Molukken, Noord Celebes en de Sanghir eilanden, gedurende de Spaanse bestuursperiode 1606–1677*. Historisch Tijdschrift, Serie Studies No. 3. Tilburg: Bergmans.
- Willer, T. J. 1858. *Het eiland Boeroe: Zijne exploitatie en Halfoersche instellingen*. Amsterdam: Frederik Muller.

